

9. Site Specific Policies

9.1 In addition to the over-arching spatial and design strategy described in Chapter 6, a number of policies are needed to provide helpful guidance to developers and their architects and consultant teams considering specific sites.

List of Site Specific Policies

- SS1 Sites Reserved for Major Developments of Strategic Importance
- SS2 Primary Shopping Area
- SS3 Midsummer Boulevard East
- SS4 Indicative Land Use Proposals Plan

Sites Reserved for Major Developments of Strategic Importance

Aim of policy:

- » To protect the extraordinary development potential of Block B4 and Blocklets F1.2-F1.4

9.2 Block B4 and Blocklets F1.2 - F1.4 are in public ownership, and have scale and locational advantages within CMK that are rare and very special.

Policy **CMKAP SS1**

Strategic Reserve Sites

Blocks B4 and Blocklets F1.2 - F1.4 are identified as being reserved for major developments of strategic importance, such as a university campus, major research or similar institute, or international headquarter offices or government establishment which would raise the profile of Milton Keynes nationally and/or internationally.

Sites reserved for major developments should be comprehensively planned, designed and developed, through the use of a parameter plan, statement of design principles and by quantifying the maximum gross floorspace for the respective proposed land uses.

Phased development of these strategic reserve sites shall be acceptable in the context of an agreed parameter plan, however, piecemeal development of these sites shall not be permitted.

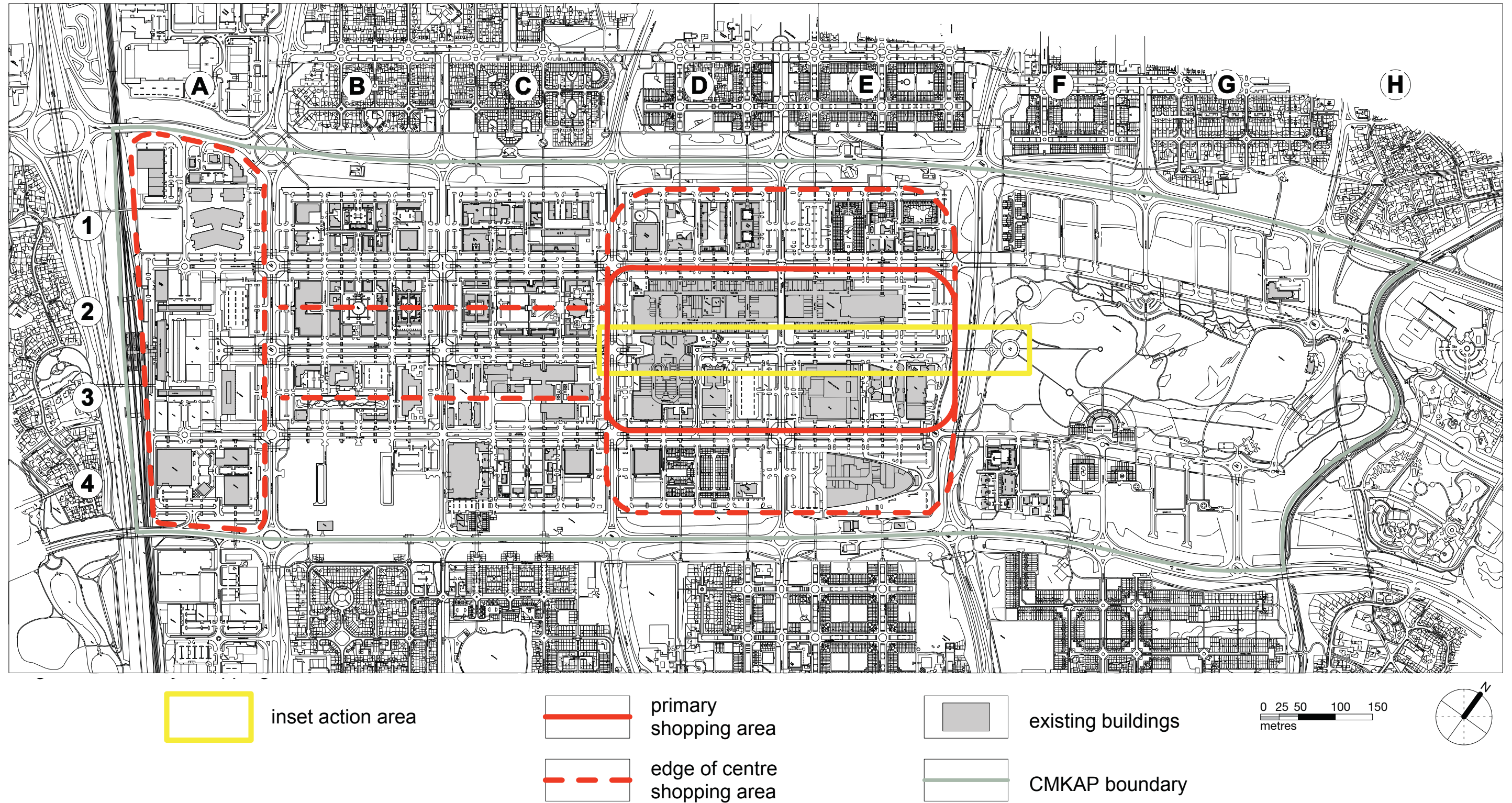


Figure 11: Primary Shopping Area and Midsummer Boulevard East Inset Action Area

Primary Shopping Area

Aim of policy:

- » To define the Primary Shopping Area and Edge of Centre;
- » To widen retail choice and competitiveness;
- » To retain and extend the outdoor market.

9.3 The Primary Shopping Area is defined as in MK Council's adopted *Core Strategy* as Blocks D2, E2, D3 and E3.

9.4 The 'Edge of Centre' shopping zone as defined in the *National Planning Policy Framework* cannot be applied to CMK in a conventional way, as CMK is a grid whereas the *NPPF* concept is based on the idea of a city centre as a hub at the centre of rings of land use activity. The 'Edge of Centre' for CMK is defined as including the surrounding areas in Blocks D1, E1, D4 and E4, the frontages to Blocklets along the length of Midsummer Boulevard, and Blocks A1 - A4 at the Station End. The established Primary Shopping Area and proposed new Edge of Centre area, into which retail development is encouraged to overflow in order to widen retail choice and competitiveness, are illustrated in Figure 11.

9.5 The objective of this approach is to enable larger retail units that cannot be accommodated in the Primary Shopping Area to be encouraged to locate in the Edge of Centre area. Further, and as elsewhere in CMK and for the same reasons, in both areas it is proposed to encourage mixed uses. Shopping areas that close when the shops close obstruct movement and diminish the vitality of the city centre as a whole. Similarly, the increasing trend for shop units to paste over or infill their public street frontages is in direct opposition to the desire for active frontages promoted elsewhere in this Plan, and is to be resisted and reversed wherever possible. The objective is to encourage the development of CMK retailing as part of a lively and attractive city centre experience with the unique attribute of having out-of-town regional shopping mall accessibility.

9.6 In further pursuit of widening retail choice and competitiveness, the advantages of which are evidenced by the Government's Portas Review, it is proposed that larger retail developments should be obliged to incorporate a range of smaller units, protected by legal agreement from future amalgamation, and made affordable for smaller specialist and local retailers.

9.7 The established open air Market Square in CMK is very popular and successful and there is competition for space between permanent stall holders (who have established themselves in lock-up metal cabins) and demountable (set-up/take-down) street trading operations. Mobile shops and hot food vendors of varying sizes add to the variety.

9.8 The proposal in this Plan, again as envisaged in the Government's Portas Review, is to offer the permanent stall holders an opportunity to grow into a new permanent covered Market Hall nearby, thereby freeing more outdoor market space which in turn may help new small retail businesses to get started.

- 9.9 The most appropriate location for a new covered Market Hall is considered to be on Blocklet D3.4, or as an alternative Blocklet D3.3, which are adjacent to Market Square. A policy to secure the delivery of this element as part of the future development of that land is proposed.
- 9.10 The objective is to support an outdoor market that is made attractive not only by its large critical mass but by its variety, and competitiveness.
- 9.11 The proposal for the Market Hall is not put forward as a way of clearing Market Square. Outdoor street trading in such a central location is both generally traditional and expected in British towns, and is an established feature of the structure of CMK since major shopping activity started in 1979.

Policy CMKAP SS2

Shopping Area

- a) When retail development over 1,000 m² cannot be realised in the Primary Shopping Area, sites in the Edge of Centre area (as demarcated in Figure 11) may be considered, followed by sites adjacent to Boulevards and Gates elsewhere.
- b) Major new retail developments (more than 2,500 m²) shall encourage the provision of small shop units (up to 500 m²). Where small shop units have been provided under this policy, the amalgamation of individual units will not be permitted without justification.
- c) Development of Block D3 with a Market Hall, as shown in the Proposals Plan, is encouraged with permanent stalls for independent retailers and market traders.
- d) Improvements to the existing outdoor market in Market Square will be encouraged to provide not only attractive lockable and serviced small stall units and a number of mobile traders, but also to provide the flexibility of demountable stalls for single day 'set up/take down' traders.
- e) To improve the visitor experience and services, a mix of leisure, cultural and community uses within the Primary Shopping Area is to be provided as part of any new major retail development.
- f) The pasting over or infilling of permitted shop frontages to Boulevards, Gates and Streets shall not be permitted and shall be reversed where possible.

Midsummer Boulevard East

Aim of policy:

» To identify Midsummer Boulevard East as an Inset Area Action plan for further design work.

9.12 'Midsummer Boulevard East' is that length of Midsummer Boulevard between Saxon Gate and Marlborough Gate, currently occupied at its western end by the weather protected open space called Midsummer Place, and at its eastern end by Campbell Park. Secklow Gate Bridge crosses in the middle of this length, providing traffic-free pedestrian space below in Market Square. Between Midsummer Place and Market Square, Midsummer Boulevard is currently reserved for the use of buses and to give access to taxis and disabled parking areas.

9.13 It has long been MK Council policy to achieve the creation of a major civic space in the area of Market Square. The *Consultation Draft* of this Plan supported that objective, but not at the expense of the loss of Market Square and its market function. It was felt that the desired civic space – presumably for a wide variety

of public celebrations, demonstrations, and congregations, though this had never been specified - should preferably be achieved on adjacent land in Midsummer Boulevard if it was pedestrianised, or in another location for such gatherings in city centres such as adjacent to the Civic Offices or the City Church.

9.14 In processing the consultation responses received, it became clear that the brief for a major new civic space in CMK needs to be most carefully researched. There are already numerous spaces designed for some of the functions that might ordinarily be concentrated in such a space. The Events Plateau in Campbell Park is used for travelling funfairs and festivals, and Middleton Hall is used for trade fairs and exhibitions, for example. Would the viability of these other places be harmed by the creation of a new space? And what size might the new space be – what size of crowds, how often and for how long? And what support facilities would be needed, such as electricity, lighting, public lavatories, and provision for emergency services and police?

9.15 It also became clear that a consensus did not yet exist about the future of the eastern half of 'Midsummer Boulevard East:' should it be restored to its original form and function as a classic CMK Boulevard; be fully pedestrianised; or remain in its present use for disabled parking, taxis and a bus route?

9.16 The Plan therefore proposes that 'Midsummer Boulevard East' is identified as an Inset Action Plan Area within the Plan (see Figure 11), where a detailed design and consultation process is to be undertaken by the CMK Alliance; and that the resulting scheme either be processed as a Modification to this Plan in due course, or be incorporated in a roll forward of this Plan, whichever is most helpful to all concerned.

Policy CMKAP SS3

Midsummer Boulevard East

'Midsummer Boulevard East' as identified in Figure 11 is proposed as an Inset Action Plan Area, for which a detailed design and consultation process is to be undertaken by the CMK Alliance.

Indicative Land Use Proposals Plan

Aim of policy:

» To deliver the indicative land uses shown in the Proposals Plan.

- 9.17 Existing uses, site constraints and key objectives have been carefully considered in proposing the broad mix of land uses for undeveloped or under-developed sites in CMK for the period of this Plan.
- 9.18 The indicative land uses are illustrated in the Proposals Plan and listed in the accompanying table (see Chapter 11).
- 9.19 Development Management by MK Council is necessary to achieve the spatial strategy for CMK, and the targeted amounts of commercial and retail floor space, as well as the number of residential dwellings, as set out in the adopted *Core Strategy*.

Policy **CMKAP SS4**

Indicative Land Use Proposals

- a) The Proposals Plan (Figure 16) and associated schedule (Table 4) will be used to guide development of undeveloped or under-developed sites, as well as regeneration and refurbishment opportunities of existing sites, as noted.
- b) The delivery of the broad land uses shown will be encouraged; however, variations may be acceptable as long as they meet the aims of Policy *CMKAP G6 Mixed Use*.
- c) Proposed variations will need to be assessed against the following criteria:
 - i. that the proposed alternative uses do not jeopardise the desired spread of uses or overall ambition for growth in CMK;
 - ii. that cultural, sporting and community facilities, where indicated, are accommodated by careful design that will demonstrate compatibility with the mix of uses to which they contribute.